

POLICE BOARD
CITY OF CHICAGO

STATEMENT BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

October 4, 2021

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the City Council. I am Ghian Foreman, President of the Police Board.

The people of Chicago and across the nation continue to be tested by many challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and higher levels of violent crime in many communities. Many are understandably frustrated and angry, and the public is rightfully demanding action from leaders at all levels of government and society. The members of the Police Board and I have worked diligently on matters where we can make the most difference—strengthening police accountability and increasing opportunities for and responsiveness to community input on police-related issues.

The Board works to foster public trust by serving as an impartial decision maker in the most serious police disciplinary cases, striving to perform this duty with independence and openness. These cases range from highly visible charges of unjustified police-involved shootings to other less visible yet still significant allegations of misconduct. The role of the Board, like that of a court of law, is to undertake a thorough review of the evidence in each case and render a fair, unbiased decision. The Board has continued to hear cases during the COVID-19 pandemic; several hearings have been conducted via Zoom, and all hearings are open to the public. The Board announces its decisions at its public meetings, and then immediately publishes on its website its written Findings and Decision, which include a detailed explanation of the reasons for the Board's action. All members of the public have an

opportunity to read the decisions so that they may make an informed judgment of the Board's work.

In addition to deciding police disciplinary cases, the Board is now considering appeals by applicants for a probationary police officer position who have been removed from the Chicago Police Department's eligibility list due to the results of a background investigation. We received the first appeals in late July and expect to issue the first decisions later this month.

At each monthly Police Board meeting, members of the public are welcome to address questions or comments to the Board, the Superintendent of Police, and the Chief Administrator of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability. Dozens of community members have spoken at these meetings this year, with comments ranging from individual concerns about police conduct to neighborhood-group solutions to crime for the Police Department to consider. The Board documents and tracks community input to ensure responsiveness to the community's issues and concerns.

The Board's monthly public meetings, which have been held via Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic, are now carried live by CAN-TV. The Board has used these meetings to help the community understand the way the police accountability system functions, including presentations about the steps in the disciplinary process, the purpose and content of the Consent Decree on police reform, and the Police Department's community-engagement plan.

The Board has continued to make significant progress in implementing requirements of the Consent Decree. We have established selection criteria for our hearing officers, incorporated Consent Decree requirements into the process for handling disciplinary cases,

published a wide range of case-specific and aggregate data about Police Board decisions, and met quarterly with the Civilian Office of Police Accountability and the Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety. We expect the upcoming report from the Independent Monitor to show that the Board is in compliance with the vast majority of its Consent Decree paragraphs.

In submitting our budget request for 2022, we are mindful of the need to be as efficient as possible. Except for cost-of-living salary increases for the Board's two staff, there are no requested increases for any other account, as we anticipate being able to carry out our responsibilities with no additional resources.

Thank you very much for your consideration of the Board's budget, and I am happy to respond to any questions you have.